

November 22, 2005

Stovall and Horton Lead Blue Raiders in 62-35 Win over Houston

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MURFREESBORO, Tenn. - Three Middle Tennessee women's basketball players were in double figures in the Blue Raiders 62-35 commanding win over Houston Tuesday in front of a crowd of 2,622 in the Murphy Center.

Veterans [Tia Stovall](#) and [Krystle Horton](#) led all scorers with 13 points a piece and Blue Raider newcomer [Monique Martin](#) added 11 in the squad's victory. Middle Tennessee dominated the boards with a 44-34 advantage in rebounds and also had 16 steals to the Cougars six. Houston was also 0-12 from the three-point line.

The Blue Raiders even their record to 1-1 on the season and Head Coach Rick Insell picks up his first win at the helm of the women's basketball program. Houston falls to 1-2 on the year.

Middle Tennessee opened the game with four straight points before Houston scored off a free throw at the 17:25 mark. The Blue Raiders expanded the lead to 10 it's largest of the half, thanks to a lay-up by Stovall with 6:51 left in the first half.

Houston chipped away at the lead and cut Middle Tennessee's advantage down to six three times, but the Blue Raiders always had an answer. Middle Tennessee assured the momentum would continue in their favor when Stovall hit a jumper with five seconds remaining in the half to help the Blue Raiders to a 10 point lead, 29-19, going into the locker room.

Middle Tennessee was relentless in the second half, never giving Houston a chance to claw back into the ball game. After the Blue Raiders scored the first four points of the game, the Cougars cut the lead down to 10 but never got any closer.

For the game, Middle Tennessee forced 29 Houston turnovers and held their giveaway to just 19. After giving up 19 points in the first half, Middle Tennessee proved stingy in the second half allowing just 16 points in the second half.

The Blue Raiders return to action on Friday and Saturday when the team hosts the Middle Tennessee Classic. On Friday, Eastern Kentucky will face Louisville at 5 p.m. and Middle Tennessee meets Georgia Southern at 7 p.m. Saturday action begins at 3 p.m. with Louisville and Georgia Southern and then closes out when Middle Tennessee meets Eastern Kentucky at 5 p.m.

NOTES:

INSELL'S OPENER: Middle Tennessee Head Coach Rick Insell won his first game as a collegiate coach tonight against Houston of Conference USA. After a disappointing season-opening loss at Chattanooga, Insell's Blue Raiders bounced back for a convincing victory. Insell, who won 775 games as a legendary high school coach at Shelbyville, picked up his first win at home in front of a crowd of 2,622.

BIG CROWD: Tonight's crowd of 2,622 was the largest home crowd since 2001 when the Blue Raiders drew 2,819 against Western Kentucky on Feb. 24. Middle Tennessee won that game as well, 75-70.


SHUT DOWN: The Blue Raiders won tonight's game with defense as they held Houston to just 35 total points and 30.8 percent shooting from the field. The point total is the fewest allowed by Middle Tennessee since giving up just 30 points against New Orleans in the first round of the SBC Tournament last year.

GIVENS HAS CAREER-HIGH: Junior [Chrissy Givens](#) set a personal-best in the win over Houston with six steals. Givens' previous high in that category was four on five different occasions. Givens now has 97 steals for her career.

HORTON HAS SOLID NIGHT: Junior [Krystle Horton](#) enjoyed a solid all-round game against Houston to help key the Blue Raider win. The Murfreesboro native poured in 13 points on 5-for-7 shooting to go along with seven rebounds, two assists, and two steals. It marked the 48th time during Horton's career she has scored in double figures.

BANGIN' THE BOARDS: Middle Tennessee dominated the glass against Houston by a 44-34 advantage as six different players



Senior Tia Stovall had 13 points in the Blue Raiders 62-35 win over Houston on Tuesday. (MT) 

pulled down at least five caroms to key the victory. More importantly, the Blue Raiders owned the offensive boards by a count of 19 to nine. Freshman [Brittany Pittman](#) led the way on the offensive end with four, while [Lakira Boyd](#) and [Krystle Horton](#) added three each. The Blue Raiders have now won the rebound battle in both games to start the 2005-06 season.

TIDBITS: Freshman [LaCondra Mason](#) made her first collegiate start tonight against Houston ... Freshman [Brittany Pittman](#) came off the bench to grab five rebounds in just eight minutes of action ... The win over Houston was just the second in seven attempts against the Lady Cougars ... The Middle Tennessee bench outscored the Houston bench, 19-6 ... [Lakira Boyd](#) equaled her career-high with five rebounds off the bench ... [Monique Martin](#), playing her first home game as a Blue Raider, scored in double figures for the first time in her career with 11 points ... [Chrissy Givens](#) played all 40 minutes tonight and has now played 79 of 80 possible minutes this season.

QUOTES:

HEAD COACH RICK INSELL:

"Krytle Horton, [Tia Stovall](#) and [Chrissy Givens](#) did a great job tonight, what more can you say about them."

HOW THIS WIN RANKS IN INSELL'S CAREER: "I've taken all my other wins and put them on the top shelf. I love Shelbyville but Middle Tennessee is now my home. This is my first win. I am 1-1.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THIS GAME AND CHATTANOOGA: "It was easier to coach the team tonight then when we were at Chattanooga. We felt like we were a better ball club today then we were Friday. We are young and we are getting better every day and getting familiar with each other. We are getting more familiar about what we can do. I think tonight we stuck with the dribble motion offense and we have to work on that."

"We didn't make a lot of adjustments for the second half. We talked about finishing and about hitting the boards and keeping Houston off the boards. We knew they had a chance to come back, we were only 10 up and they are an explosive team. Houston is one of those teams that are hot and cold and when they are hitting those shots they are going to beat you."

SENIOR FORWARD TIA STOVALL:

"I think the win was very important. It kind of sets the tone for our season and our program and for our home fans. Not only did we do it for Coach [Rick] Insell but we did it for ourselves and our university. I think by getting this victory it sets a precedent for what we are going to do for the rest of the season."

JUNIOR FORWARD KRISTLE HORTON:

"After the way we lost to Houston last year, I think we had something to prove to our fans and to Houston this year. I think we wanted to show how much we had improved and what we could do against an athletic team like Houston."

Printed on May 23, 2012

Original URL: <http://www.goblueraiders.com/content.cfm/id/4617>